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Kinesthetic Interpretations of Poetry (Creative Attitude Among Nine-Year-Olds)

Abstract

The aim of the paper is the search for action ways which will reveal the potential embedded in the literary work (understood as the satisfaction of mental needs, stimulation of reflexive attitude) and activate the plentitude of the child's creative interpretation abilities. The author took it upon herself to answer the following question: How far will a kinesthetic procedure of a child's contact with a book affect the stimulation of its development in the divergent spheres?

Key words: *child's literary education, interpretation of lyric poetry, intersemiotics*

Introduction

The primal objective of modern education is the comprehensive development of the pupil, the chance of its fulfillment may occur under the condition that certain criteria, like the following ones are met: acceptance of the child, creation of the communicative atmosphere, and above all the use of such work methods that would activate and develop the creative attitude. What we have in mind at this point is the shaping of divergence by means of the atmosphere of a literary adventure which is the source of aesthetic experiences enabling total cognition and experiencing the world (Piątek, 1997).

Therefore, the text receiver cannot be treated in an instrumental manner, what is more the literary piece should not be used in order to convey and present mainly pedagogic theses and tasks assumed arbitrarily by the teacher (the use of literary pieces only as bases of grammar exercises). Simple texts are useful for the recognition of poetry elements and may be applied as a didactic tool but approaching

poetry in such a way will destroy its aesthetic and supportive dimensions since lyrical texts should accustom children to the difficult world of the literary art and shape their ability of reflexive reception.

The instrumental approach functioned for many years as far as thinking of early-school literary education is concerned. It was mainly based on highlighting the traditional functions (Kida, 1997), which determined 'the school life' of a text. Analyzing the topic from the viewpoint of literature supportive dimension we should enumerate its other functions: **autotelic**, **creationist** and **anamnestic**. The autotelic one concerns treating work with a literary text as an activity characterized by ludicity (Cieślikowski, 1985), a reference of the literary situations composing a field for the activation of the creative interpretative behaviour of a child in the dimension of play (Nęcka, 1999). A significant amount of fun should be present in it as well as spontaneous exploration, advocating illusoriness being the quintessence of divergence (Krasoń, 2005). Playing by means of poetry and with poetry is one of the postulates of the proper shape of literary lessons as mentioned by Stanisław Bortnowski (1998), and what is more it is a guarantee of the pleasure need fulfillment. The symbolic play seems to be of the greatest importance, in which a child transfigures '*the objective world, and adds a new meaning to it*' (Rzeźnik, 1993).

The creationist function shows the importance and value of the creative development which takes place in the divergently arranged situation of contact with a literary piece. The text evokes associations, motivates to field the text's metaphorical mystery essence, in other words it refers to the filed of the new reality creation carried out by the reader.

The anamnestic function, on the other hand, reasons the significance of **looking into** oneself generated by the literary metaphor, assessing one's choices, values and beliefs as represented by the reader. The piece is of assistance in understanding the self but it encourages changes if such a change is required in our life.

The kinesics – proxemic strategy presented below undoubtedly finds its own place in this trend.

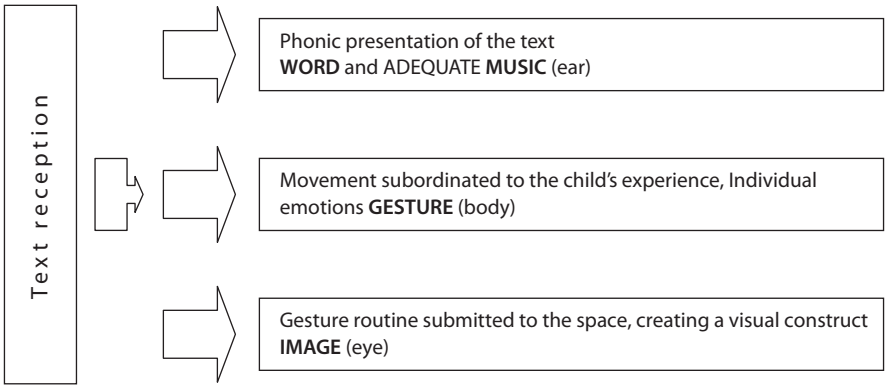
Kinesthetic text analysis strategy (the procedure presented below is the keynote of the thesis: K. Krasoń, 2005)

A crucial assumption at this stage is the one stating that every child is characterized by a preferred channel of sending and receiving information which becomes a leading plane for the creative expression (Krasoń, Szafraniec, 2002; Krasoń, 2003). An auditory person will seek ways to express oneself in a verbal manner, a visual learner will concentrate on communiqués based on the configuration of objects

placed in a given space and a kinetic learner – penetrating the closest and farther kinesphere – will be willing to express themselves by means of kinetic movements (Krasoń, Szafraniec, 1999). Acknowledgement of such an idea of modality – as a reference point of seeking the right formula of stimulating a learner's creative development (Kovalik, 1991), in a specific way determines the educational strategy presented below.

The procedure was based on the intersemiotic fusion of various activities of the learner as it makes use of re-coding of the word signs into signs which are subjected to other semiotic systems (movement, image, music). It also refers to a very characteristic feature of every child, mainly to the possibility of the alternation of verbal information to non-verbal one and expressing oneself by means of various forms of artistic expression (Krasoń, 2001). It creates a chance of polisensory (multi-channel) reaching to a child (Krasoń, Mazepa-Domagała, 2003) – in accordance with the VAKT idea and the concept of Howard Gardner (cf. Gardner, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1999a, 1999b, 2002; also cf.: Campbell, Campbell, Dickinson, 1999) at the same time allowing the text recipient to feel the experiences coming from the artistic expression of oneself by means of movement (Krasoń, 2005) (cf. Chart 1.).

Chart 1: Reception and interpretation of the text by means of the polisensoric intersemiotic transmission



Source: based on a chart published in: Krasoń, 1996, pp. 179, 180.

Listening to a story should take place directly before undertaking creative actions. Understanding of the outside layer will take place at the moment of plot recognition. Selection of music will describe an emotion area while direct motion experiences will help the child to understand meanings, and in that way, let them

reach super-context. Using the kinesthetic channel is justified since a few-year–old child has mastered that way of world exploration first, and is able to express perfectly their feelings in that way. It additionally strengthens the undefined character of metaphor, because motion behaviour gives a chance for further ambiguity of expression, and it remains an individual "mystery" of the performing reader. The next stage is common space composition. Creating a motion – space arrangement requires putting in order movement, placement of performing people within space, paying attention to preserving the individual kinetics sphere. In that way, a common, repetitive scheme of particular kinetic signs is composed; this constitutes a resultant of feelings in all participants. It is a group "dance", story in movement in which emotions and individual associations play a role being arranged in a common structure (space-motorial configuration is based on Emil Jaques-Dalcroze method. Cf.: Jaques-Dalcroze, 1965). Space arrangement makes use of almost all individual proposals generated during a non-directive motorial improvisation, which lets them all perform at the same time, although it requires being directed.

Due to motor activity, a way of expressing oneself characteristic of a few-year-old child productive thinking is being generated bringing new, original effects. And although sometimes a kinetic stereotype occurs, it mainly concerns a particular kinetic sign but never a complete idea of kinetic materialization.

Application of the kinetic-spatial procedure during classes will allow to change a meeting with literature into an element of integrated education combining diversified forms of the child's activity beginning with the intellectual one through the artistic and emotional one and finishing with the social interaction. Therefore, it will not be yet another example of the content and action correlation but a true holistic comprehension of teaching and education of a learner from the 3rd grade.

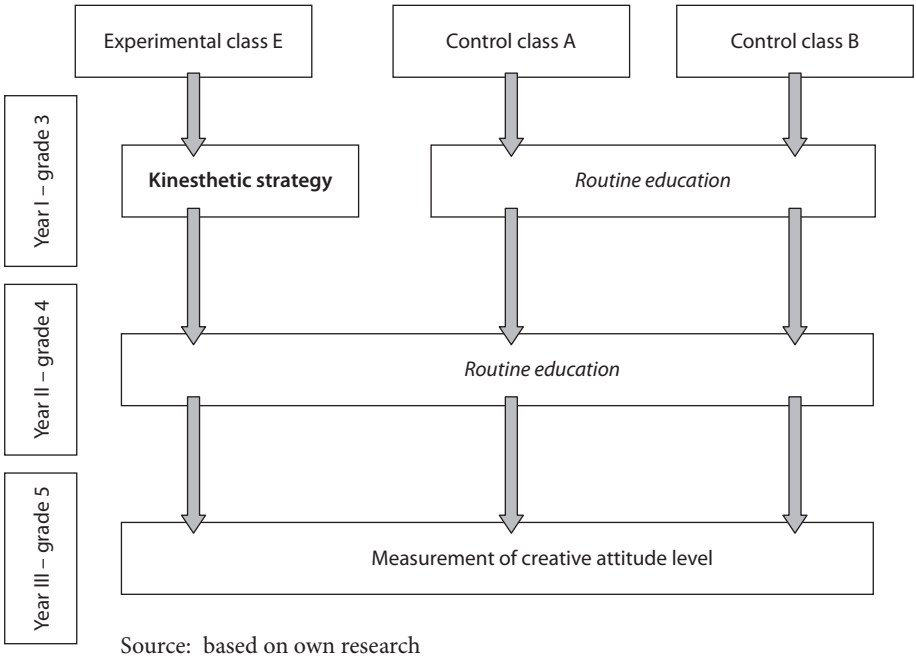
Kinetic expression specially arranged in the space routine and stimulated by the literary induction creates a possibility of projecting one's own deficiencies, negative experiences thus kinetic visualization of past experiences becoming a way of self-discovery, dealing with traumatic experiences, learning ways of expressing one's own emotions and – as it turned out – also stimulates the divergent potential of a child.

The activity concerning the text metaphor presented above, which is a peculiar conundrum solved by means of movement, initially individual one and later group movement, triggers off almost simultaneously all types of modality. Literary induction evokes kinetic-spatial expression being the text transcription. It will be done on the basis of arts cognation where the emotional plane functions as the comparison layer. First an individual creation is created, and then a group one which in turn is being re-coded to explanatory verbalization, thus we go back to the text and we have never truly parted from it anyway.

Exploration proceedings

The research was carried out by means of the experimental and control group technique without the initial measurement (cf. Chart 2). It was assumed that the initial point of all the subjects in the research groups was the same. All the learners attended non-state schools, which select children before they are accepted to the 1st grade measuring their intellectual development level. Throughout early-school education they cover similar syllabus (all classes based on the packet – '*Wesoła szkoła*' ['*Fun School*']). The classes are not numerous, and the learners come from motivating and successful backgrounds. Additionally, due to the fact that KANH questionnaire and its usage require triangulation (strategy of competent judges) which cannot be executed at the level of early-school the above research method was the only applicable in such a situation as the pupils are taught by only one teacher.

Chart 2. Research structure



Source: based on own research

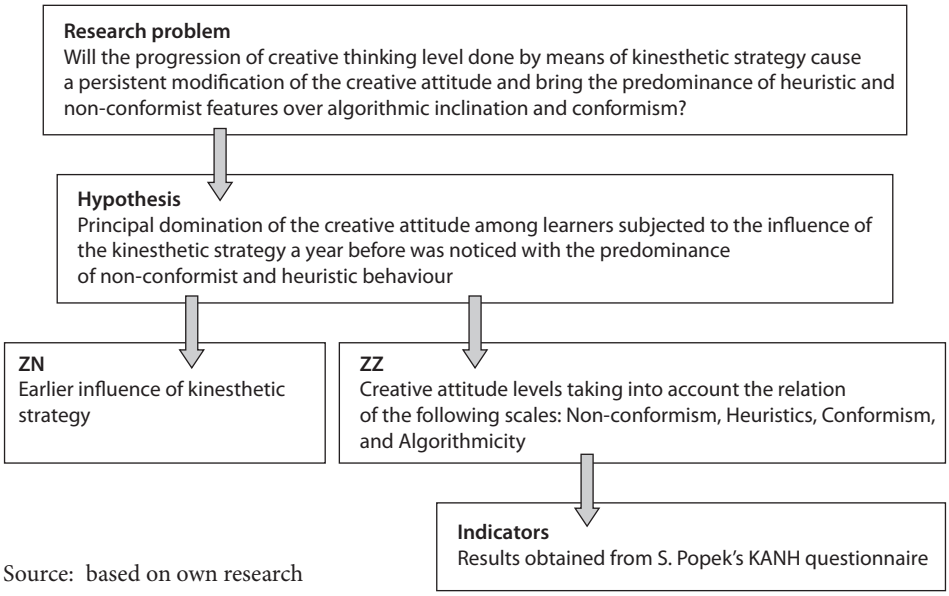
3rd graders of the primary school were subjected to the kinesthetic strategy (as presented above) throughout the whole school year (where one class was subjected to the experimental factor, and the other two classes were control reference). The

research done by means of the delayed procedure (a year from the moment the method was used) stating difference in the creative attitude level, assumed at the same time the persistence of the effects/changes as they took place in case of every child.

After the completion of the whole year of education in the 4th grade the groups were measured focusing on the divergent potential. The issue of the changes persistence of creative development is a key one to recognize the true value of the strategy of kinesthetic interpretation of metaphor.

Research question – presented in chart 3 – concerned the persistence of the achieved changes in the development of creativity, and S. Popek's *KAHN Questionnaire* (2000) was the indicator of creative features level.

Chart 3. Methodological basis of the research



Source: based on own research

It assumes a fusion of the character and cognitive spheres. This tool was based on the interactive theory of aptitude. *The Creative Behavior Questionnaire KANH-I* provides information concerning spheres referred to as conformism, non-conformism, algorithmic behaviour, heuristic behaviour, and the creative character is characterized by the predominance of heuristic behaviour over the algorithmic one.

Unfortunately, the above-mentioned tool is not accessible for a young respondent: the establishments to be made by the research subject can be difficult as early

as at the phase of decoding the content, the objectivity of the provided answers also raises doubts. Due to the above reasons a slight modification was made concerning the use of the statements set which was forwarded to the teachers of the 5th grade. At the same time they became competent judges facing the task to establish the relation between the creative and imitative relation among their learners. The judges were: a 5th grade master, a maths teacher and a humanities subject teacher (Polish teacher or a foreign language teacher).

The questionnaire was used at the beginning of the education in the 5th grade and thanks to its results a correlation between the creative and imitative relation was established in the researched population. It had been assumed that the predominance of non-conformist and heuristic features over algorithmic and conformist ones would point out the stability of effects of the learners' creative thinking stimulation commenced by means of the experimental procedure in the 3rd grade.

Results general approach

Analyzing the results of the 3rd grade the author will first of all focus on the basic establishment whether the configuration of the divergent features prevails over conformism and algorithmicity in the researched populations and whether this relation is of statistical importance and justification. In such a way the author aims at searching for the answer to the research question: will the progression of the creative thinking attitude done by means of the kinesthetic strategy application cause a permanent modification of the creative attitude and bring the predominance of heuristic and non-conformist features over the algorithmic and conformist ones?

The comparison (made by means of the t test for the combined pairs) of the average results in particular classes was carried out checking the relation of the results obtained from the judges based on the creative vs. imitative attitudes. Thanks to the above it was possible to establish whether one of the spheres is predominant in the research class. This inquiry brought the following establishments: in the experimental class the difference between the results obtained in the Non-conformism (N) – Conformism (K) and Heuristics (H) – Algorithmicity (A) scales show the predominance of the creative attitude, and the importance of the difference was established at the level of p **0.000**.

Table 6. Differences in the results obtained in scales Class 5/E

	Average	Standard deviation	Difference	Standard deviation	*p*
PO K	8.792	1.699			
PT N	18.750	2.938	–9.958	4.022	**0.000**
PO A	11.771	1.407			
PT H	21.458	3.100	–9.688	3.518	**0.000**

In the control classes the results were in class 5/A obtained results differing its results in particular spheres incoherent as class 5/A also obtained results which differed significantly in the achievements of particular spheres with the indication to the creative attitude prevalence (nonetheless the importance is slightly lower than in case of the experimental class). However, the results obtained by class 5/B indicate the difference, also statistically important, but in this case the predominance of the algorithmicity and conformity scales place the class population at the level of imitative attitude preference.

Table 7. Differences in the results obtained in scales Class 5/A

	Average	Standard deviation	Difference	Standard deviation	*p*
PO K	10.958	1.637			
PT N	16.042	2.264	–5.083	3.837	**0.007**
PO A	13.333	1.652			
PT H	15.875	1.860	–2.542	2.588	**0.027**

Table 8. Differences in the results obtained in scales Class 5/B

	Average	Standard deviation	Difference	Standard deviation	*p*
PO K	16.639	1.812			
PT N	12.861	1.997	3.778	3.217	**0.002**
PO A	15.306	1.872			
PT H	12.194	3.252	3.111	4.076	**0.023**

In order to analyze the results more deeply and obtain an exemplifying material the results of individual learners will be presented in the form of a table presenting the particular sten values (norms taken from Popek, 2000). In this way it will be

possible to analyze individual cases as well as to determine the number of the learners representing actual creative attitude. In such a way the author will avoid the generalization error and will show real correlations between the represented KANH [CANH] scale relations.

Results individual approach

Looking at the individual results brings a different perspective as it becomes very clear that the learners in the experimental class are characterized by a significantly higher level of creative attitude as can be seen in the shaded areas (Table 9). Four children were classified at the high level of creative attitude (sten 9–10 in the heuristics scale, with decidedly low levels of stens representing the imitative attitude) the remaining subjects placed at average levels are slightly above average. It can be said that children from class 5/E are characterized by an average level of balanced features.

Table 9. Spheres of average results among children with sten norms Class 5/E

CHILD'S NAME	IMITATIVE ATTITUDE				CREATIVE ATTITUDE			
	CONFORMISM (C) CHARACTEROLOGIC SPHERE		ALGORITHMIC BEHAVIOR (A) INTELLECTUAL SPHERE		NON-CONFORMISM (N) CHARACTEROLOGIC SPHERE		HEURISTIC BEHAVIOR (H) INTELLECTUAL SPHERE	
	result	sten	result	sten	result	sten	result	sten
Gosia	9.67	4	14.67	6	17.00	4	22.67	8
Dominika	9.67	4	12.67	5	12.67	2	17.33	5
Jacek	11.67	5	10.67	4	18.67	6	21.00	7
Łukasz	9.33	4	12.33	4	16.00	4	20.67	7
Szymon	10.00	5	11.33	4	22.00	7	22.33	8
Adam	6.00	3	11.33	4	19.33	6	20.67	7
Karolina	11.67	5	12.33	4	17.00	4	19.33	6
Marta	6.67	3	12.33	4	22.00	**7**	**26.33**	**10**
Madga	8.00	4	10.33	3	20.00	6	22.67	8
Daria	7.67	4	11.33	4	23.67	**8**	**27.00**	**10**
Jan	8.00	4	11.00	4	19.67	6	16.00	5
Andrzej	8.33	4	8.67	3	20.00	6	20.33	7
Agata	8.33	4	11.33	4	21.33	**7**	**24.00**	**9**
Michał	8.33	4	13.00	5	16.00	4	19.67	7

Marcin	6.67	3	11.33	4	19.67	**6**	**25.00**	**9**
Kasia	10.67	5	13.67	5	15.00	3	18.33	6
The average results of class	**10.28**				**20.10**			

Table 10. Spheres average results among children with sten norms Class 5/A

CHILD'S NAME	IMITATIVE ATTITUDE				CREATIVE ATTITUDE			
	CONFORMISM (C) CHARACTEROLOGIC SPHERE		ALGORITHMIC BEHAVIOR (A) INTELLECTUAL SPHERE		NON-CONFORMISM (N) CHARACTEROLOGIC SPHERE		HEURISTIC BEHAVIOR (H) INTELLECTUAL SPHERE	
	result	sten	result	sten	result	sten	result	sten
Karolina	10.33	5	13.33	5	17.33	4	16.33	5
Agnieszka	10.00	5	11.33	4	**18.00**	**5**	**17.67**	**6**
Emil	12.33	5	12.00	4	13.67	3	15.33	4
Michał	12.00	5	12.33	4	13.33	2	15.00	4
Piotr	12.67	6	12.33	4	14.33	3	13.67	4
Magdalena	10.00	5	15.67	6	18.00	5	16.33	5
Damian	12.33	5	15.67	6	14.67	3	13.67	4
Ludmiła	8.00	4	14.00	5	**19.00**	**6**	**19.00**	**6**
The average results of class	**12.14**				**15.95**			

The population of the control class 5/A (Table 10) are characterized by a different arrangement or relations between particular features of the creative attitude even though, as can be observed in the results, this class as well had statistically different results pointing to the prevalence of the creative attitude. Only at this point it is easy to observe the correlation between particular features and the result balance at the above average level. The learners represent ambivalent attitudes and it is hard to classify them as one preference area. The highest tare in the Heuristic and Non-Conformism scales is 6 sten points therefore only equalization of the average level (Ludmiła's and Agnieszka's cases).

The other control class is a completely different case as in Table 11 the predominance of the imitative attitude was clearly presented. The learners are placed at the high levels of algorithmicity and conformism (four cases) and at a slightly above average level. The divergence level, on the other hand, is low, only in two cases

(Kinga and Magdalena) it is average. In this class the tendency of feature balance is non-observable.

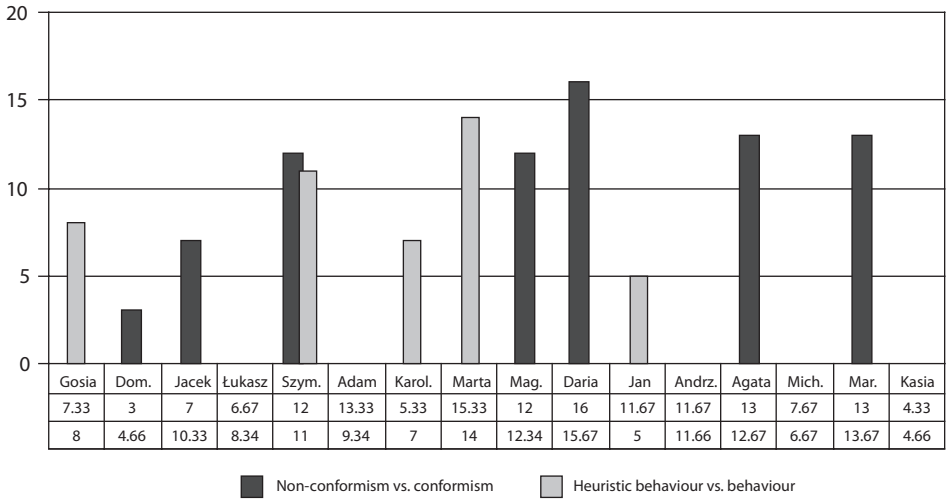
In order to present the value of the above findings the author will make use of the charts showing the differences between the features of the characterologic sphere and the intellectual one which show more clearly the correlations between creative and imitative preferences (it is in accord with the assumption that the 'purity' of the creative or imitative attitude is determined by the difference in the values on the feature continuum of the same sphere. Negative values were ascribed to scales A and C [K] and positive values for the scales H and N).

Table 11. Spheres of average results among children with sten norms Class 5/B

CHILD'S NAME	IMITATIVE ATTITUDE				CREATIVE ATTITUDE			
	CONFORMISM (C) CHARACTERO-LOGIC SPHERE		ALGORITHMIC BEHAVIOR (A) INTELLECTUAL SPHERE		NON-CON-FORMISM (N) CHARACTERO-LOGIC SPHERE		HEURISTIC BE-HAVIOR (H) INTELLECTUAL SPHERE	
	result	sten	result	sten	result	sten	result	sten
Zuzanna	15.67	7	12.33	4	11.67	2	12.33	3
Aleksandra B.	**18.33**	**8**	**14.00**	**5**	11.00	1	9.33	2
Łukasz	**17.67**	**8**	**16.67**	**7**	14.00	3	11.33	2
Kinga	**18.67**	**8**	**14.33**	**5**	15.33	3	18.33	6
Aleksandra D.	16.00	7	12.67	5	11.00	1	10.33	2
Katarzyna	16.33	7	17.00	7	13.33	2	12.67	3
Joanna	**19.00**	**8**	**16.67**	**7**	10.33	1	13.00	3
Magdalena	14.67	6	14.33	5	16.67	4	18.67	6
Marek	17.33	7	16.00	6	12.33	2	8.33	1
Maciej	16.00	7	14.33	5	11.67	2	11.33	2
Jakub	12.67	6	17.67	7	15.00	3	11.00	2
Marta	17.33	7	17.67	7	12.00	2	9.67	2
The average results of class	**15.97**				**12.52**			

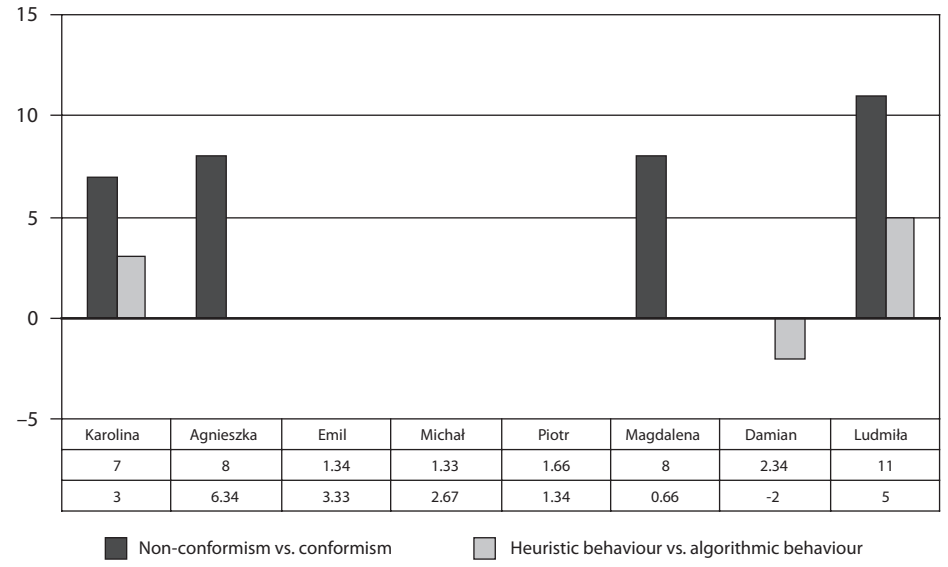
In the class where the experimental factor was present a year earlier the results are all placed in the positive values. A significant predominance of the divergent preferences is easily noticeable with a strong influence of heuristics and a harmonized level of non-conformism which constitutes a very favourable combination as far as the future creative potential development is concerned.

Chart 4. Correlation between intellectual and characterologic spheres – class 5/E



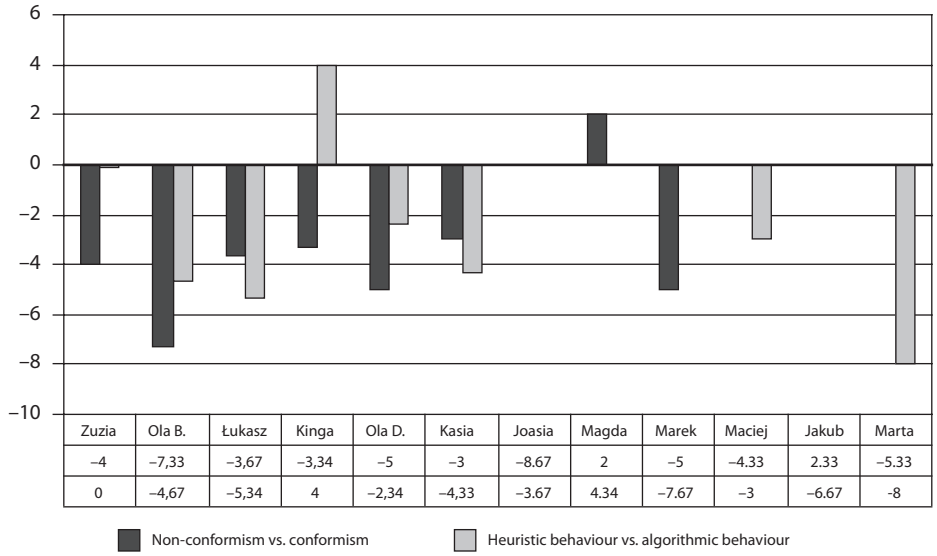
Gosia	Dom.	Jacek	Łukasz	Szym.	Adam	Karol.	Marta	Mag.	Daria	Jan	Andrz.	Agata	Mich.	Mar.	Kasia
7.33	3	7	6.67	12	13.33	5.33	15.33	12	16	11.67	11.67	13	7.67	13	4.33
8	4.66	10.33	8.34	11	9.34	7	14	12.34	15.67	5	11.66	12.67	6.67	13.67	4.66

Chart 5. Correlation between intellectual and characterologic spheres – class 5/A



Karolina	Agnieszka	Emil	Michał	Piotr	Magdalena	Damian	Ludmiła
7	8	1.34	1.33	1.66	8	2.34	11
3	6.34	3.33	2.67	1.34	0.66	-2	5

Chart 6. Correlation between intellectual and characterological spheres – class 5/B



	Zuzia	Ola B.	Łukasz	Kinga	Ola D.	Kasia	Joasia	Magda	Marek	Maciej	Jakub	Marta
Non-conformism vs. conformism	–4	–7,33	–3,67	–3,34	–5	–3	–8.67	2	–5	–4.33	2.33	–5.33
Heuristic behaviour vs. algorithmic behaviour	0	–4,67	–5,34	4	–2,34	–4,33	–3.67	4.34	–7.67	–3	–6.67	-8

In group 5/A the results – with only one exception – (Damian) are also placed in the positive area, but only in two cases the level reaches a dominant dimension and it is true only for the non-conformism plane. It suggests individuals characterized by a high aspiration level which, however, is not supported by an equal level of intellectual potential. Such cases – as discussed by S. Popek (2000) – often suffer from a lack of self – realization as with huge determination they possess a lower intellectual aptitude.

Control class 5/B differs much as far as the correlation of creative and imitative attitudes is concerned. The results presented in Table 3 show a negative tendency, only three cases: Magda's and partially Kinga's and Jakub's are placed in the positive areas. One cannot mention the balance at this stage either as in case of Jakub the aspirations have a positive dimension and intellectual aptitude a negative one (!), the reverse situation was noticed in case of Kinga where the intellectual aptitude is not supported by a strong characterologic sphere. A positive correlation of both spheres can only be noticed in case of Magda. Here a tendency to submit is very strong – Joanna obtained the highest score of all the research groups.

Final remarks

Analyzing the obtained empirical material the author classified the observations gathered by competent judges and on this basis verified the hypothesis assumed earlier. It seems correct to assume that there is truth in the statement claiming that **there is a significant predominance of the creative attitude among learners subjected to the influence of the kinesthetic strategy with the prevalence of non-conformist and heuristic behaviour**.

The use of the kinesthetic strategy applied to explain the poetic metaphor seems justified at this point as a means of stimulating the divergent potential of a child as additionally proved by the research that the method is characterized by its constancy format.

The kinesthetic interpretation of lyric poetry allows: to complete to cognition and experience of a literary text by means of parallel activation of perception channels; experiencing the literature with the entire being which influences a more precise decoding and assuming of the values present in the text; to activate the interpersonal modality satisfying natural needs of expressing oneself, appreciation, communication with others and expressing of one's own experiences.

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